

262 people did not want to spend much on a baby, therefore they
261 said that if a child ate too much "with-rice" he would be
potbellied but thin in the upper part of the body, and that
eating eggs would cause dental caries. This grandfather
said he believed the truth to be just the opposite, but that
goods things were expensive. As an illustration of the idea
that thrift was the basis of restriction of "with-rice,"
one young mother said that an egg was regarded as equivalent
to one (1)plaa (1)thuu (fish), and was enough for two per-
sons. Sometimes one egg would serve an entire family. She
said that a child would be punished if he ate a whole egg
at a meal.

262 Secondly, Chutima suggests that particular foods were
associated with, or suitable for, particular age levels, and
a given sex. Data obtained in Bang Chan indicate that cer-
tain foods were associated with conditions such as pregnancy,
lactation, and the puerperium, with occupation, and even
• 653 socio-economic levels. For infants, breast milk was con-
sidered most suitable. The newborn infant was not usually
put to the mother's breast for about 3 days after birth, and
if a relative or neighbor did not nurse the infant, the small
banana called (3)klunaj (4)nen-(4)waa (see p. 46), raw or
baked, was crushed and fed to him before his mother's milk
was available. This banana and rice, as (3)khaaw (3)tom and
(3)khaaw (2)ping (two watery preparations), sometimes crushed
with (3)klunaj (4)nam-(4)waa, were always the first solid foods
introduced while the infant was breast fed. No other foods
were introduced early. Some infants received fish and egg by
6 months of age, and a majority ate these foods by the time
they were a year old. Some two year olds had not yet been
given vegetables, and very few infants ate them before they
were one year old.

855 Giving of "holy food"¹ to children suggests concern for
[778] strengthening children through dietary as well as other ritual
means.

262 At the other end of life, as old age approached, the
853 diet was supposed to change, ideally to a completely vege-
tarian one. Since one was soon to face death, one gave up
eating meat and even fish, if possible, so as to avoid taking
life. It was considered pitiful or wrong for an old person
to fish. Being able to go without food was associated with
merit. Those who stayed overnight at the temple on the Budd-
hist holy day went without solid food from before noon until
the next morning as the priests did. One elderly woman re-
marked that when she stayed overnight at the temple she did
not feel hungry, and did not eat anything at night, but other
women, feeling hungry, drank coffee or milk at night. She

1. See p. 50.